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Macaulay, Zachary

Letter to William W. Whitmore, Esq.,
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A

LETTER

TO

WILLIAM W. WHITMORE, ESQ. MP.

Pointing out some of the

ERRONEOUS STATEMENTS

CONTAINED IN A

PAMPHLET

BY

JOSEPH MARRYAT, ESQ. M.P.

ENTITLED

“ A REPLY

TO THE

ARGUMENTS

Contained in

VARIOUS PUBLICATIONS,

Recommending an

EQUALIZATION

OF THE

Duties on East and West India Sugars.”

Mar 24 1823

BY THE AUTHOR OF A PAMPHLET

ENTITLED

“ EAST AND WEST INDIA SUGAR.”

James Macaulay Esq

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LUPTON RELFE,

13, CORNHILL;

AND HATCHARD AND SON, PICCADILLY.

1823.

MARCHANT; Printer, Ingram Court, Fenchurch Street.

A LETTER,

&c. &c.

My dear Sir,

You have requested me to furnish you with any observations which may have occurred to me on the perusal of Mr. Marryat's Reply to some recent pamphlets on the Sugar question. I proceed to comply with your request, premising that both the shortness of the time allowed me (your motion on the subject being announced for the 19th instant) and the state of my own health will oblige me to omit some of the topics, on which, under other circumstances, it would be easy to show, that the statements of that gentleman are as erroneous and his reasonings as inconclusive as I hope to prove that they are on those which I have the means of investigating.

The first point to which I shall advert, and perhaps the most important of all, is the attempt made by this author to produce the impression, that the sugars brought to this country from British India are grown by slaves. He does not deny, (indeed, that fact cannot be made the subject of controversy,) that the sugars of the British West Indies are cultivated exclusively by slaves; but he labours to make it believed, that the sugars, also, of Bengal are cultivated by slaves. This I

had unequivocally denied. I had affirmed, that in *Bengal* sugar was “certainly not” cultivated by slaves. Mr. Marryat, “in contradiction,” as he says, “to this bold assertion,” quotes a passage from the Report lately made by the Court of Directors of the East India Company, on the culture of sugar in India, which he wishes to be regarded as a satisfactory refutation of my statement. Now, when the author cited this passage, he must have had in his hands the whole of that voluminous Report. It is also evident that he had read it with considerable care; for he has selected with great ingenuity every line in it which on this part of the case could be made to suit his purpose. He, therefore, may be presumed to have read the various passages which I am about to cite.

The first is taken from the consultations of the Bengal Board of Trade, of the 7th August, 1792, inserted in the First Appendix, p. 51 to 60, and is as follows:—

“Of the price” [of sugar] “in the West Indies, the Board have not accurate information; but a short comparison of the condition of the cultivators of the ground in the West-India islands with those of this country, will show the probability of its always being more expensive to raise sugar there than in Bengal. The agriculture of the former is carried on under circumstances so forced and unnatural that while they excite the indignation and pity of the philosopher, they create his astonishment that a concurrence of incidents in human affairs could ever have established them. In order to obtain a rude produce of the ground, human beings have been forced from a country about 4000 miles distant from that which they are to cultivate; and whatever may have been their former condition or habits of life are compelled to the rudest toil. None of the West-India labourers are Aborigines; *none of them are freemen*. The whole are slaves imported as above described, or the descendants of such imports; and their population is so continually on the decrease that regular supplies from Africa are deemed necessary to keep up the requisite

number. So confined are the territories of these islands, at least of the British West-India islands, and several of the French, that without neglecting those productions which are the objects of northern nations, they are unable to furnish the food necessary for the support of their own inhabitants. Grain, flour, salt-meat, and salt-fish, are carried at a great expense from the distant regions of Europe and North America, and form the principal subsistence of the slaves.

“ It is superfluous to dwell upon the heavy charge of the establishment of overseers and superintendents requisite for urging the labour of slaves ; but it is sufficient to observe, that the expense of obtaining the produce of the ground by such means will be necessarily above the natural level.

“ In this country (Bengal), the cultivator is either the immediate proprietor of the ground, or he hires it, as in Europe, of the proprietor, and uses his discretion in cultivating what he thinks best adapted to the nature of the soil, or the demand of the market. One field produces sugar, the next wheat, rice, or cotton. The husbandman is nourished and clothed from his own ground ; or, if he thinks it more his interest to sell the whole of his own produce, supplies himself and family with the necessaries of life from his neighbour or from the next public market.

“ In the British West-India islands, the value of a seasoned ordinary man-slave, in the prime of life, is about £60, say 600 current rupees, and the interest of money is there about 6 per cent. ; consequently, 36 current rupees per annum is the value of the stock per head, supposing the stock permanent ; * which is more than the average price of labour in this country. The death of the slaves decreases the stock in the proportion, taking the matter in a general view, that the number of slaves

* The interest of money invested in the purchase of slaves cannot be fairly reckoned at less than 10 per cent. but this is independent of the food and clothing and medical attendance, &c. which the slave requires ; of the taxes paid for him ; and of the various other disadvantages accompanying slavery.

born in the islands are insufficient to keep up the requisite number without importations from Africa. THE BENGAL PEASANTRY ARE FREEMEN; and are, in the usual course of nature, replaced by their children.

“ Other circumstances have their effects. The West-India slave has no interest in the success of his labour. A good crop alleviates not his condition; a bad one renders it not worse, while he receives his daily ration of European or American grain and salt provision. There is no cheering motive to animate his industry. The proprietor of the estate often resides in Europe, and leaves the management to hired servants, to the consequences of whose knavery and negligence he is open, while his slaves are exposed to their want of humanity.

“ The Bengal peasant is actuated by the ordinary wants and desires of mankind. His family assist his labour and sooth his toil, and the sharp eye of personal interest guides his judgment.

“ In the West Indies the whole labour of the ground is performed by hand, with the spade or hoe. Here the ox and plough, as in Europe, lessen the labour of man, and facilitate the productions of the earth.”*

The above lucid and satisfactory statement is followed by a great number of Reports from the Residents and Collectors in different provinces belonging to the presidency of Bengal, and extending nearly to the end of the first Appendix, through more than 200 closely-printed folio pages. In these Reports there is not a single syllable to be found which contradicts the view given of the subject by the Bengal Board of Trade. Could any such contradiction have been extracted from them, the diligent re-

* If you will take the trouble to turn to the pamphlet on East and West India Sugar, p. 89—95, you cannot fail to observe the exact coincidence of the statements there made (and which Mr. Marryat would represent as so fallacious) with those contained in the above extract from an authentic official document. And this is the more remarkable, as I was not aware of the existence of this indisputable authority on the subject, until my own statements were already before the public.

search of the author of the Reply would, doubtless, have discovered it. On the contrary, the existence of slavery, as a condition of society, in Bengal, is not once alluded to by any of the reporters ; although, had the cultivation of sugar been conducted by slave-labour, it would have been impossible for them to have avoided the recognition of it. They have given us a variety of minute and detailed calculations of the cost of raising sugar ; but the value of slaves or the expense of maintaining them is not once hinted at. There is no more allusion to slave-labour, in any part of those numerous and voluminous Reports, than there would be to slave-labour in a report on the expense of cultivating wheat in Shropshire or in Norfolk ; or than there would be to the hire of free labourers in a report on the expense attending the culture of sugar in Jamaica, Barbadoes, or Demerara.

I shall copy one or two of these estimates, the first that present themselves, to which all the others will be found to be exact counterparts, in this respect, at least, that they all speak of hired labour and never once allude, in the most remote degree, to slave-labour.

From Mr. Cheap, Resident at Soonamooky. Estimated produce of a bigah of sugar-cane (p. 92).

“ 28 maunds of goor, at 1 rupee, R. 28 0 0

Deduct charges

4 ploughings	R. 0 7 0
2 harrowings	0 3 6
10 bullock-loads of cow-dung and bullock-hire	1 12 0
50 ditto of black-mould, and ditto	0 8 0
Plants	3 0 0
4 maunds of pressed mustard-seed	1 4 0
Labourers' hire, weeding and wa- tering	2 0 0
Ditto cutting cane, bringing	

it to the pressing-house, gune-			
lahs, boiling, &c.	4	6	0
Hire for the pressing-house ...	0	14	0
Bullock-hire for pressing ditto ..	3	8	0
Revenue for 1 bigah	3	0	0
			<hr/>
			20 14 6

“ It is understood, that all the labourers are to be hired. A man cultivating for himself will do double the work of a hired labourer. Estimated profit..... 7 1 6”

From Mr. Fletcher, Resident at Radnagore. Estimate of the expense attending one bigah of sugar-cane, and boiling the same into Jaggree (p. 150).

“ Rent	S.R.	3	0	0
Plants		3	0	0
Preparing and planting 22 coolies, weeding 5, earthing plants 6, watering 15, tying the leaves 24, in all 72 coolies		6	0	0
Ploughing, eight days,.....		0	12	0
Cutting the cane 20 coolies, grinding the cane, and boiling the juice into jaggree 54, in all 74 coolies		6	2	8
Sursum seed, a little with each plant,.....		2	0	0
Straw for fire with dried cane		1	0	0
Jars and pots.....		1	0	0
				<hr/>
				22 14 8”

We have seen what is stated on this subject by the Board of Trade. The members of that Board must have resided many years in Bengal before they could have been eligible to the situation they held. They must, therefore, have been cognizant of the fact, whether sugar was or was not cultivated by slaves, as the members of the Supreme Council, to whom their observations were addressed, must also have been. They, however, distinctly represent the cultivation of sugar in the

Bengal provinces to be conducted by free labour in contradistinction to the slave labour of the West Indies. We also find, that in not one of the estimates, which were transmitted from the various provinces of Bengal to this Board, is the very slightest allusion made to slave labour, as forming a constituent part of the charge of cultivating sugar. But this is not all : even this conclusive evidence is further strengthened by incidental notices of the most unequivocal kind, occurring in different parts of these reports, and which abundantly confirm the correctness of my assertion, that sugar is not cultivated in Bengal by slaves. To cite a few examples :

Mr. Udney, the Resident at Malda, in a letter dated Feb. 18, 1793,* thus writes :

“ The expense of cultivating one bigah” (about 1600 square feet) “ is estimated at Rs. 8.8, whereof the particulars are,

Store of ploughs, oxen, &c.....	Rs.1	12	0
Cooley hire	0	14	0
— weeding, eight times	4	0	0
— cutting, and bringing earth	0	8	0
— tying canes, four times	1	0	0
Petty charges	0	6	0
	<hr/>		
	8	8	0

“ The quantity of canes produced per bigah is estimated at 8000, value Rs. 13.

“ When a ryot employs hired servants alone to cultivate his land, his profit is estimated at Rs. 1.8 per crop per bigah; but few if any ryots do pay for the whole labour bestowed on their land, but cultivate in part with the members of their own family; and, inasmuch as a ryot is able to employ them in cultivating the land, and looking after the canes, so much he gains: thus the profit he derives per bigah per crop may be averaged at 4 to 6 rupees.”

* First Appendix, p. 146.

Mr. Cheap, the President at Soonamooky, in a letter, dated February 14, 1793, takes occasion to observe that, "The ryots possess no capital, and therefore are unable to purchase a sufficiency of *manure* to prepare their grounds," (p. 154.) He does not say (nor does any one else, when treating, as they frequently do, of the same point, the deficiency of capital) that that deficiency disables the cultivators from purchasing a sufficiency of *slaves* to prepare their grounds; (this is what would naturally have occurred to West-Indians, or to any who treated of cultivation by slave labour;) but only that it disables them from purchasing a sufficiency of *manure*.

In a lengthened report from Mr. Treves, the acting political resident at Benares, dated April 20th, 1793, that gentleman (p. 191) enters into a discussion of the question, "How far the cultivation of the cane might be attempted by an European with any prospect of advantage?" The following is his solution of the question.

"The first point he would have to attend to would be, land proper for his purpose, a low jumma (rent), and the facility of watering from tanks and wells. It would then be necessary to purchase bullocks, make ploughs, collect manure, &c. for it is impossible to set out upon any attempt of this kind with any, the slightest, reliance for assistance from the natives. Occasionally, they might plough and water for him, but he must be known to have resources within himself by having bullocks, ploughs, &c. otherwise he will never be able to induce the ryots to work for him but on terms that would be ruinous. And here, perhaps, if it is considered, that, to carry on the cultivation of sugar to any extent, there must be a constant and heavy expense in feeding some hundreds of cattle, which will, of course, be unserviceable, or idle, nine months in the year; whereas the ryot has constant means of employment for his; the plan, in its outset, may appear unadvisable. Further, an European *must give high daily wages to all his*

people. He must keep an establishment of sorkars, peons, &c. ever connected with European exertion in India; besides being liable to innumerable deceptions, which nothing but long and generally dear-bought experience can enable him to detect. A ryot, on the contrary, prepares his plantation with the same cattle that plough his other lands. *His whole family work upon it*, and though it is true that these must be fed, still they are maintained for one-fourth of what they would expect to receive if at day wages; and as to superintendence, it costs him nothing." Again: " Though, exclusive of the jumma, the cultivation of the cane is usually attended with a certain degree of expense, even to the ryot, yet it is certain that his greatest profits arise from the culture of this valuable plant. I have already mentioned that his comparative advantages are many, since the whole of his family are ever employed on the plantation, and thus the necessity of hiring daily labourers is entirely removed. The same cattle not only plough his cane lands, but also those for wheat, barley, &c." Such being the case, he proceeds to remark on the impossibility of ascertaining the *actual* expense incurred by the ryots in cultivating the cane and expressing the juice. The estimates, therefore, which he submits to the supreme government, he states (p. 199) to be " grounded on the *supposition* that all labour, assistance, &c. bestowed or applied, has been paid for according to the usual rates of the country; or, in other words, those rates are calculated at what the cultivation would probably cost, were it carried on by a person not possessed of the natural local advantages of the ryot, and who would be obliged to pay the hire of labourers and of bullocks, and the cost of manure, &c. &c. during every stage, from the first ploughing of the field to the final expression of the cane-juice."

Whether Mr. Treves be right or wrong in his general reasoning on the question which he proposes to solve, is of no moment to the present inquiry. It is perfectly evident that he never once contemplated the purchase or employment of slaves,

as calling for any place whatever, either in his reasonings or calculations. Slaves are never mentioned or even alluded to. The only substitute for hired labour which he ever hints at, is the labour of the farmer's own household. In like manner, the Board of Trade in making an abstract of the different statements that had been sent to them, and estimating the average cost of cultivating the cane and manufacturing the sugar at R^s. 20 per bigah, observe, (p. 119,) that this abstract "supposes labourers and instruments to be *hired*. But the actual outlay to a husbandman possessing oxen and proper implements of husbandry, working on his own account, and assisted by his family, is estimated at R^s. 10. 4 per bigah. This difference is considerable; but it is limited by the extent of labour to which the family is competent."

The only other document, in the first Appendix, to which I need allude, in proof of the correctness of my view of the subject, and the incorrectness of that of the Author of the Reply, is a letter addressed to the Government of Bengal, on the 6th February, 1793, by Mr. William Fitzmaurice, (p. 210-216,) in which a minute comparison is instituted between the mode and the expense of cultivating sugar in the West Indies and in Bengal. Mr. Fitzmaurice had lived as a sugar planter in Jamaica for sixteen years. "From the luxuriance and fertility of this country," (Bengal,) he observes, "I think it is amply competent to the supply of all Europe with sugars; and that even the West-India planters themselves might import them hence on much easier terms than they can afford to sell sugars in the curing houses on their own plantations."—"Indeed, the waste lands, occupied by the tigers, between this (Calcutta) and Ingelee, would produce nearly as much sugar as the island of Jamaica; and, as to labour, thousands of labourers may be had, by the day or week, or month or year, at two annas per day, or three rupees per month, the highest here given."—"And inasmuch as the cultivation of the sugar-cane destroys annually, in the West, thousands of men, women, and children,

by incessant toil, it will save the lives of thousands in the East by giving them employment and sustenance." He then compares the estimated profits of a Jamaica estate, yielding 150 tons of sugar, and cultivated by a gang of 200 slaves of all ages, with those of a plantation in Bengal capable of producing the same quantity. In the latter case there is no mention whatever made of slaves; but, in their stead, we have "200 labourers at three rupees per month, including tradesmen."

To destroy the effect of this mass of testimony, what does the Author of the Reply produce? He produces the following passage, quoted from the East-India Report, (Appendix III. p. 80). "Slavery is not unknown in Bengal. Throughout some districts the labours of husbandry are executed chiefly by bond-servants. In certain provinces the ploughmen are usually slaves of the peasants for whom they labour; but treated by their masters more like hereditary servants, or like emancipated hinds, than like purchased slaves. They labour with cheerful diligence and unforced zeal. In some places, also, the landholders have a claim to the servitude of thousands among the inhabitants of their estates. This claim, which is seldom enforced, and which, in many instances, is become wholly obsolete, is founded on some 'traditional rights' acquired many generations ago, in a state of society different from the present; and slaves of this description do, in fact, enjoy every privilege of a free man, except the name; or, at the most, they must be considered as villeins attached to the glebe, rather than as bondsmen labouring for the sole benefit of their owners. Indeed, throughout India, the relation of master and slave appears to impose the duty of protection and cherishment on the master, as much as that of fidelity and obedience on the slave; and their mutual conduct is consistent with the sense of such an obligation, since it is marked with gentleness and indulgence on the one side, and with zeal and loyalty on the other.

"Though we admit the fact, that slaves may be found in Bengal, among the labourers in husbandry, yet, in most pro-

vinces, none but freemen are occupied in the business of agriculture."

The Author of the Reply, in introducing this extract to his readers, refers it to "the East-India Directors," and speaks of it as containing an admission, on their parts, of "the existence of slavery in Bengal." But he must have perceived, that the third Appendix, from which it is taken, contains nothing which emanates from the Court of Directors, either in the way of statement or admission. It contains only extracts from the "writings of scientific persons in India and other authors on the sugar-trade." Twenty-six different works are here quoted at considerable length; and, among the rest, Edwards's History of the British West Indies and Sir William Young's West-India Common-Place Book. The Directors do not attempt to fix the value of these authorities. They have done no more than collect with great industry, and a most laudable impartiality, all that was to be found scattered throughout a variety of publications on the subject of the culture and commerce of sugar. It is in one of these publications, entitled, "Remarks on the Husbandry and internal Commerce of Bengal, 1806," that the passage quoted by Mr. Marryat, and which he chooses to attribute to the Directors, is to be found. Even the name of the respectable author is not given. And yet Mr. Marryat speaks of it as being an admission "by the East-India Directors" of "the existence of slavery in Bengal." He might, with equal truth, represent them as admitting the superior advantage of the West-India trade over that of the East Indies, because they have inserted in the same Appendix the comparative view given by Mr. Edwards of these two branches of commerce.

But to have done justice even to the author of the above quotation, the writer of the Reply was bound, in fairness, to have given also the passage which immediately precedes it, in which he is instituting a comparison between the advantages enjoyed by the East and West Indian growers of sugar respectively. "The same advantages," he observes, which are enjoyed in Bengal, "do not exist in the West Indies. It is

worthy of observation, that the labour of the negro constitutes more than three-fifths of the cost of sugar in Jamaica. So that if the West-Indian planter were even able to substitute straw huts for his expensive buildings, or simple implements and earthen vessels for his intricate machinery and costly apparatus, still the price of labour would be an insuperable bar to a successful competition. Independently of calculation and comparison, it is obvious that the labour of a slave must be much dearer than that of a freeman, since the original purchase will always form a heavy charge, from which hired labour is exempt. Moreover, the West-Indian slave has no incentive for exertion; nor can he be roused to it by the smart of recent chastisement, or by the dread of impending punishment."

But I have hitherto pointed out but a small part of the unfairness which is justly chargeable on Mr. Marryat's representations on this subject. "The existence of slavery in *Bengal*," he says, "is *admitted* by the East-India Directors, although the description of it" (the description of it, that is to say, which he had previously cited) "is softened in a manner not easily reconcilable with the accounts already quoted." All who read this passage would conclude that Mr. M. was here referring to authorities previously quoted by him in proof of the existence and harshness of slavery in *Bengal*. What then will be their surprise to find that the authorities he had previously quoted, and to which he here refers as disproving the assertion that sugar in *Bengal* is not cultivated by slave-labour, are drawn, not from any account of Bengal, but from an account of some newly-ceded provinces, at the distance of more than one thousand miles from Bengal, and quite on the opposite side of the peninsula of India? This method of proving his point is the more remarkable, because it is now a second time deliberately resorted to, notwithstanding a complete exposure of its disingenuousness in the very pamphlet to which he is replying. He here repeats the refuted statement without deigning to notice the decisive refu-

tation it had received. (See East and West India Sugar, p. 90.)

Great Britain had just come into possession of certain provinces in the southern part of the Peninsula, which had been subject either to the Nabob of Arcot or to the Sultan of Mysore. Dr. F. Buchanan was employed to examine their state, and to report upon it. From his report, which was afterwards published under the title of "A Journey from Madras through Mysore, Canara, and Malabar, in 1800;" it appears that in some of these newly-acquired provinces slavery was to be found. The author of the Reply quotes these instances to prove that sugar in *Bengal* is cultivated by slaves. From the beginning to the end of his journey, however, Dr. B. does not approach within a thousand miles of the Bengal provinces, and his work might, therefore, be quoted with as much truth and fairness in proof of the existence of slavery in Japan as in Bengal. What should we think of a writer who should deduce from Dr. Clarke's account of slavery in Russia, the existence of slavery in Denmark, because both countries were comprehended under the term Scandinavia, or, who should argue that, because there are at this day certain services which tenants in some parts of Great Britain are bound to render to their landlords, (similar, probably, to the "claim to servitude" existing, though growing "obsolete," in Bengal,) therefore, the corn of Great Britain is the produce of slave-labour.

But it is further remarkable that the proofs to which the author of the Reply has chosen principally to refer, as establishing the fact that the sugars brought to this country from India are cultivated by slaves, respect provinces from which no sugar is exported to this or any other country. Dr. Buchanan himself makes this statement in one of the very chapters from which Mr. Marryat labours to prove his point; affirming that sugar is absolutely required to be imported thither for the consumption of the inhabitants.

But the most remarkable circumstance of all remains to be noticed. It is this, that the East-India Report, to which the Au-

thor of the Reply so often refers, and from which he has gleaned with so much care every expression which can be made to serve his purpose, actually contains a survey by this same Dr. Buchanan of several of the Bengal provinces. This survey Mr. Marryat has chosen wholly to overlook while he goes with the surveyor on his tour to the Mysore and Malabar, in order to pick up every mention he makes of slavery in his account of that region, in order to apply it to the provinces of Bengal, in the very teeth of Dr. B.'s own detailed account of those provinces.

“The Statistical Survey of the Districts of Dinajpur, Rongopur, Puraniya, Bhagalpur, Behar and Patna, Shahabad and Ghorakpur,” by this same Dr. Francis Buchanan, now Dr. Hamilton, between 1809 and 1814, occupies seventeen closely-printed folio pages of the East-India Report. But not one line of his survey of those Bengal provinces could be found to serve Mr. Marryat's purpose. He is obliged to recur to the Doctor's survey of the ceded provinces in the South for his proofs of slavery in Bengal. I challenge him to produce a single sentence in the Statistical Survey of these districts, by this minute and accurate reporter, which will support his assertions. Dr. B. not only does not mention slavery as existing there, but there are, in his Survey, many passages which seem more decisively to disprove the employment of slaves in the culture or manufacture of sugar than if he had specifically denied the fact.

In Dinajpur (Appendix III. p. 23), he represents the neighbouring farmers as uniting to take off each other's crops of sugar, the only person that is hired being the sugar-boiler. In a detailed estimate of the expense of a particular sugar-manufactory (p. 29) he refers only to hired labour.

In Rongopur he states the expense of the mill as follows :—

“ To mill and boiler	R ^s 9 8
To seven labourers' wages for four months, à 10 annas	17 8
To food for the same.....	17 8
To 10 sers of extract for each.....	2 0
To the wages of the head man, at 1½ Rupees ..	6 0

To seven gundas of cowries, on each pot of juice
for the proprietor of the mill 4 8

Similar statements are made with respect to the other provinces in Bengal surveyed by Dr. Buchanan.

The remaining papers in this Appendix, drawn from scientific works, seem equally conclusive as to the fact that the sugars of Bengal are not produced by slave labour. In one of these, "a Bengal Planter," after having stated that the sugars of that region are usually cultivated by the ryot and his family, (p. 49, 63, &c.) with the occasional addition of hired labour; and having entered into a great variety of minute calculations on the subject, none of them containing the most remote allusion to slave labour; makes the following seasonable remarks, which I beg to recommend to general attention, as furnishing an answer to at least one-half of Mr. Marryat's pamphlet.

"No consideration, in my humble opinion, for West Indian property ought to crush the progress of improvement in this country, and fetter the commerce of our own. Such a policy is unjust to Bengal: it is injurious to England. And for what are these restrictions to be enforced? For the conservation of slavery. To preserve and perpetuate the returns of West-Indian estates to a few monied men in England, is it right that they should have a national monopoly for the produce, and that the welfare and happiness of millions should be immolated at the shrine of a system founded on principles the most abhorrent to humanity? If the West Indies cannot support their sugar-plantations under a competition with a country so distant as Bengal, they will soon become too burdensome to be maintained much longer." p. 60.

The following remarks, also, are no less important. The author of them, Mr. Botham, was well acquainted with the culture of sugar both in the West and East Indies. He thus states his opinion on the subject (p. 84):—"The culture of the cane in the West Indies is in its infancy. Many alterations are to be made; expenses and human labour lessened. The hoe now used to turn up soils of different textures is of one

construction, cheap and very light, so that the negro, without any help from its weight, digs up the earth, and the cane-roots on re-planting, *by the severest exertion*. In the East we plough up the cane-roots.

“ Having experienced the difference of labourers for profit and labourers from force, I can assert that the savings by the former are very considerable. The West-India planter, for his own interest, should give more labour to beast and less to man. A larger portion of his estate ought to be in pasture. When practicable, canes should be carried to the mill, and cane-tops and grass to the stock, in waggons. The custom of making a hard-worked negro get a bundle of grass twice a day should be abolished ; and, in short, a total change take place in the miserable management of our West-India islands.”—“ Let it be considered how much labour is lost by the persons overseeing the forced labourer, which is saved when he works for his own profit. I have stated, with the strictest veracity, a plain matter of fact : sugar-estates can be worked cheaper by free persons than slaves.”

After this lengthened statement, I am persuaded you will not attach much weight to Mr. Marryat’s farther authorities on this subject. He quotes, it is true, three brief passages (p. 40, 41) from other authors, to whose works I have no access at the present moment ; but he has taken good care, in quoting them, to avoid all specification of time, place, and circumstance, and to involve his references in such convenient generalities that they may be, and probably are, as wide of all applicability to the case in hand as the description of slavery in Malabar is to the proof that in Bengal sugar is cultivated by slaves.

I might, however, have spared both you and myself all this accumulation of evidence to prove that sugar is not cultivated in Bengal by slaves. Mr. Marryat himself has proved it in a single sentence, which, to the apprehension of every just reasoner in political economy, will be found to present a complete and satisfactory refutation of all he had been labouring to establish on this subject. The sentence is this :—“ Labour in India is

of so little value that probably the claims to servitude are not enforced, because they are not worth enforcing." This is perfectly just, and it proves, more incontestably than a thousand arguments, that slavery can have only a nominal existence in Bengal. But then Mr. Marryat fears lest a new demand for labour, caused by the increased cultivation of sugar, should revive slavery there, and create a new slave-trade. I trust, however, that Mr. Marryat and his friends will unite to prevent the possibility of such a result. We have his virtual admission, in the very fact of the cheapness of labour, that slavery can have only a nominal existence in Bengal; and I am persuaded that not only will the government of India be sufficiently awake to the rights of its subjects, but that all parties in the House of Commons, however they may differ about the extinction of West-India slavery, will join in one concurrent effort to withstand the very first approximation either to the revival, in that part of the British dominions, of any of the obsolete rights of servitude, or to any practice which shall have the remotest affinity to the accursed slave-trade.

Independently, indeed, of this admission of Mr. Marryat's on the subject of the cheapness of wages,* the fact that the labours of husbandry are chiefly conducted in Bengal by the occupier of the soil aided by his own family, would, to all who know any thing of the genius of slavery as it exists in the British colonies, be quite decisive of the question.

If, however, any doubt, or even a shadow of a doubt, shall still remain on this important question, I trust that Mr. Marryat will agree to the appointment of a Committee for its thorough elucidation. It is clearly no matter of indifference whether one hundred millions of British subjects enjoy the protection of law as freemen, or are placed in the same degrading state

* See also p. 16 of Mr. Marryat's pamphlet, where, in reckoning up the cost of manufacturing sugar in Bengal, he entirely omits the mention of slave-labour, which, had it been used, must have been, as he as a West Indian must know, by far the most costly item in the account.

of personal slavery in which the whole labouring population of our West-Indian colonies are confessedly placed. Abundance of living testimony upon this point is easily accessible ; and if Mr. Marryat is desirous of ascertaining the truth respecting it, with a view to the essential interests of humanity, he will not object to this course.

Let him not then imagine that, although I contend that the sugar we receive from Bengal is not cultivated by slaves, I am therefore disposed to screen whatever slavery may be found in any part of India from inquiry and suppression. Unhappily there exist in India many practices which are in the highest degree cruel and barbarous, and in a few districts personal slavery may still prevail. There is this difference, however, between the slavery of the East and of the West, that of the latter we ourselves are the sole authors, and are chargeable, therefore, with its whole guilt and turpitude. In the East, whatever slavery exists we found there ; we did not ourselves create it : it was the fruit of Pagan, Mahometan, or Portuguese rule, and will, I trust, soon disappear before the superior benignity of our paternal and Christian institutions. I rejoice, indeed, to believe that, since the establishment of our empire in that quarter, much has been done not merely for the mitigation but for the entire extinction of that unhappy condition of human society. I am even assured that, at the present moment, no man in British India can claim, in the courts of that country, (with the exception, perhaps, of some districts adjoining Mysore,) a right of property in the person of another, though nominally a slave ; or obtain any aid from the civil power in enforcing his involuntary services, or in recovering him, should he remove to a distance. Nay, I am further assured, that personal violence experienced by any one of those *called* slaves, would, in our courts, generally, be *now* visited with precisely the same punishment as if the individual complaining were subject to no claim of servitude. If this be so, and the fact may easily be ascertained,

it is evident there can now be little or no real slavery in British India. The matter is, doubtless, highly deserving of attention; and I trust, if a committee should be appointed to investigate it, that the result will be that whatever vestige may yet remain of personal slavery within the bounds of our Indian empire will be speedily and for ever effaced. I only wish that Mr. Marryat and his friends would join us as cordially in abolishing the slavery of the West Indies, as we should be forward in uniting with them to abolish not only slavery, but every inhuman practice still tolerated in the East.

Having disposed of this part of the controversy, I propose to save myself some trouble, by inserting a communication which I have received from our common friend, Mr. Cropper, of Liverpool, who, with his usual accuracy, has been examining some of the statements in Mr. Marryat's pamphlet. The following are Mr. Cropper's remarks.

“ There can scarcely be a stronger proof of the weakness of a cause, than when its ablest advocates, instead of supporting it by truth and candour, resort to misrepresentations and mis-statements. Such is the indubitable stamp which Joseph Marryat has fixed on the cause he has been advocating in his Reply. In the very first paragraph of his pamphlet, though the sentiment contained in it be correct, its application is unfair and unjust. It was the West Indians themselves who have proposed “ innovations,” affecting the interests of their fellow-subjects, and inconsistent “ with good faith and public justice,” while the East Indians only ask that the question may be fairly investigated.

“ The Committee of the Liverpool Association had observed in their Report; ‘ The article of cotton, though not affording the same comparative exemplification of what may be produced by a change from a high to a low duty, is yet a striking example of what may be effected by permitting an article to come in at a

comparatively low rate, *and leaving it unshackled by any restrictions and discriminating regulations.*' The Committee then proceed to show, that cotton, being charged with duties comparatively low, has increased in 120 years 120 fold, whilst the consumption of sugar, with duties bearing an enormous proportion to the cost of production, has only increased in the same period 12 fold. 'By which it appears,' they proceed to say, 'that, in the same period of 120 years, the one article labouring under excessive duties has increased only 12 fold, whilst the other article has been subject to comparatively low duties and *few restrictions*, and, being thereby brought more *freely within the command of the lower classes of society who form the bulk of consumers*, has increased 120 fold. This, however, your Committee do not mean to state as the comparison between the *consumption* of the two articles in this country, because of late years a very large proportion of our importation of cotton has been exported in a manufactured state—how much it is not very easy to ascertain; but from some late estimates it would appear to be about one half: hence the increase of the consumption of cotton is 60 fold, whilst that of sugar is but 12 fold.'

"Now what is there in this quotation which can justify such an assertion as the following: 'but this they admit was not the consequence of a reduction of duty, and therefore, in point of fact, has no bearing whatever on the subject.'—Reply, p. 7. They adduced it, however, to prove, that the absence of restrictions had operated powerfully in this instance; which surely has a bearing on the subject.—He goes on to say: 'The improvements in machinery which enable us to undersell our foreign competitors in the manufacture of cottons, have occasioned this amazing increase in the consumption of that commodity. Sugar, however, is not *only* manufactured but eaten, and although *the consumption in a manufacture* may be indefinite, *that in the human stomach is finite*; and unless the

East Indians can invent some machinery by which mankind may be induced to eat 120 times as much sugar as they now do, the comparison between cotton and sugar cannot be deemed applicable.'

" Would Joseph Marryat have his readers to understand, that whilst sugar is *not only* manufactured but eaten, cotton is *only* manufactured, and that its final consumption is in the manufactory, and not in the wear and tear of common life? If cotton is *only* manufactured, then less of it ought to be consumed. But it is not merely the need which the body may have of clothing, or the capacity of the stomach for the digestion of sugar, which alone limits the consumption of either article. It is the power of the great mass of consumers to obtain them ; but of that more hereafter.

" It is surely not necessary to prove that the *increased* consumption of cotton and sugar should be exactly the same to make the comparison applicable ; but even if it were so, the Author of the Reply cannot be ignorant, that, according to the Liverpool estimate which, by his own strange mis-statements, he attempts to turn to ridicule, it required only five times the quantity of sugar, and not 120 times as he has affirmed, to equal the rate of consumption at which cotton has proceeded.

" In order to do away several other misrepresentations, it would only be requisite to turn to the Report of the Liverpool East-India Association, p. 45.

" It is there clearly shown that if sugar *were only subject to a moderate duty*, as 6s. 9d. the cwt. the British manufacturer could, in exchange for his goods, procure it in any quantity, so as to sell coarse qualities at 2½d. to 3d. and refined at 5d. to 6d. per lb.

" The extension of sale for our manufactures in the East would create a corresponding increase of employment at home ; and this circumstance, combined with the diminution in the price of sugar, would place the article generally within

the reach of the poor. And if, on the average, only 56 lb. of raw, equal to 40 lb. of refined sugars, were used by every individual in the British empire, it would, on the present population, make 500,000 tons, being more than three times our present consumption.

“ Sugar, however, it is obvious, may be procured from India in any quantity we may desire. For if the West Indies, with a population under one million, can supply us with 200,000 tons of sugar, what may not one *hundred* millions of subjects in the East produce, from the extent of our territory, with a soil and climate equally adapted for its production? Assuredly far more than it is possible for this country or, perhaps, the world itself to consume. Not only the increase of the quantity, however, but of the consumption also must be a work of time. But in proportion as both increased, it is evident that the rate of duty might be reduced without any loss to the revenue. So that if we suppose the consumption to increase four times, a duty of 6s. 9d. per cwt. would yield as much as 27s. does now; and if the duty were charged according to value, it probably would not exceed 4s. to 5s. per cwt. on coarse sugar, such as could be brought from India, and which, including freight and charges, might be sold at 16s. to 18s. per cwt. ‘ Thus,’ the Committee observe, ‘ we should have sugar, duty included, costing under $2\frac{1}{2}d.$ per lb. from which, though the quality would be inferior to that now commonly refined, yet refined sugar might doubtless be made so as to be sold at 5d. per lb.; and all this might be effected without any loss whatever to the revenue. Moreover, if the duty were levied according to value, sugar would come to the country precisely in that state in which it could be most advantageously brought; and the business of the sugar-refiner, which bounties, restrictions, and duties, have nearly destroyed, would again flourish.’

“ The above is, in substance, the statement which the Author

of the Reply ridicules as the reveries of madmen. But in order to show that an annual consumption of 500,000, or even 600,000 tons of sugar, arrived at by a gradual increase, in a course of years, would be no unreasonable expectation, if it were put within the reach of the lower orders of society by an increase of employment and a reduction in the price of the article, both of which are likely to result from an extended and unrestricted commerce with India; it will be sufficient to state, that the 150,000 tons of sugar we now consume, when divided amongst 20,000,000 of people, afford only at the rate of $16\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of raw or less than 12 lb. of refined sugar in the year for each. Now 14 ounces of refined sugar in the week, equal to about 19 or 20 ounces of raw, which is by no means an unusual quantity for many persons to use at breakfast and tea, independently of the other uses to which sugar is applied, makes a consumption of 45 lb. of refined, or 63 lb. of raw sugar in the year for each individual; amounting, on the whole, to upwards of 560,000 tons annually: so that if the Author of the Reply will be at the pains to ascertain the capacity of his own stomach, he will probably find that it requires no invention of machinery, as he jocularly supposes, to enable it to consume his own share of a quantity far beyond what the Liverpool Committee ever contemplated, and which would make the increased consumption of sugar equal to that of cotton, or five times its present amount, and not, as he would falsely make the Committee to argue, to 120 times that quantity. That there is any disinclination in the lower classes to the use of sugar I have yet to learn; and that they would willingly consume as much as their superiors in rank now do, if they were able to buy it, any one may be satisfied who will take pains to ascertain the fact. At some charitable institutions, servants are allowed 36 lbs. of sugar per annum to use with tea only; and infirm paupers, in the workhouse of Liverpool, are allowed $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. per week to use only to one meal a day—their tea.

“ In answer to that statement which shows only an increased consumption of 30,000 tons, from 1814 to 1820, notwithstanding a reduction in price of 38s. 11*d.* per cwt. I would observe, that this is one of the few cases in which the Author of the Reply has a fair ground for argument, and in which he may not have known that he was wrong. But it is plain, from the very small quantity of sugar which, on the average, each individual consumes, and the large share of it which is unquestionably consumed by persons in easy circumstances, amounting to at least four or five times that average, that sugar is at present chiefly consumed by the higher and middling classes of society, who will not lessen their consumption for any moderate difference in the price, while during a great part of the period in question, there has been among us a state of almost unexampled distress, under which agriculture is still labouring.

“ It is not a little remarkable, that, after the Author of the Reply had been treating, as the reveries of madmen, the low rate at which the Liverpool Committee calculate that sugar may be procured when the quantity has been increased and the duty lowered in proportion, he turns round and at once stultifies his own argument, by observing, that, ‘ If government would give up the duty to the extent that the East Indians propose, leaving only 6s. 8*d.* per cwt.; this might almost be done under the present system.’ And if almost done under the present system, how much more certainly and entirely would it be effected under a system of free and unrestricted competition ?

“ The diminution which the Author of the Reply shows to have taken place in the quantity of tonnage to India, whilst, at the same time, the exports of manufactured goods have so rapidly and largely increased, is a complete confirmation of our arguments and a refutation of his own. The trade is only limited, as we affirm, by the want of a market for the raw

produce to be received in return. Now he knows well enough that, in general, one cargo of manufactured goods will pay for several cargoes of such raw produce as sugar. In his great kindness to us, however, he would have our ships not only to go out but also to return loaded in great part with ballast.

“ In page 18, he says, ‘Mr. Cropper, although he professes to be actuated by the philanthropic motive of putting an end to slavery, avows the ruin of the West Indians to be his object,’ and he then quotes the following passage to prove it. ‘ There is evidently,’ says he, ‘ a rate of prices necessary to support slave-cultivation, under a system which prevents their increase, and may require supply by fresh importation. At a lower rate slave-cultivation may be continued, but not the importation of slaves. There is, I believe, a point still lower where every system of slavery must be given up.’ The Author of the Reply has quoted thus far, but there he stops: what immediately follows he has not added, ‘ Has not that point arrived in all our cultivation and manufacture in this country?’

“ I certainly read his assertion with no small astonishment. I knew I had never felt a wish to ruin the West Indians, and that it would be strange indeed if I had ever avowed what I had never felt; on the contrary, I have often expressed a wish that they might speedily enjoy the same benefits which are enjoyed, not only by this country, but by every other where slave-labour has been abandoned, and slaves converted into free men. And I believe this has never been the case in any country, without the co-operation, at least, of the cause of which he is himself perfectly aware, (see page 43,) where he states that labour is of so little value that claims to servitude are not worth enforcing. His assertion of my avowal is as direct a misrepresentation as could have been uttered; but it has the merit of being direct. The following is of a kind much more remarkably characteristic of this writer:—

“ ‘ Another alleged inducement to this project,’ observes

this Author, ' is the great additional employment that would be furnished for British ships and British seamen. The East-India Committee say (p. 29), that, " as the distance from which East-India sugar has to be conveyed is greater, a greater quantity of British shipping and British seamen will be employed, and the trade will remain undiminished. This would be the case if the quantity of sugar imported and consumed remained the same ; but as the price will be reduced, if your labours are successful, a greater quantity will be consumed ; and thus both these important interests, instead of being injured, will be benefited."

" Now here the writer does not venture on the attempt to prove, by any argument of his own, the strange position that the British shipping-interest can suffer by doubling its employment, by bringing sugar, that is to say, from the East instead of the West Indies : he knew he might as well attempt to prove that two was a greater number than four. He first states the arguments of his opponents, without venturing to reply to them ; but he dexterously adds the following remark, evidently intended to neutralize their reasoning :—' On this point, however, the Committee of the Liverpool Association express themselves in one passage with some degree of diffidence, for THEY ADMIT that this is a question in which the maritime interests are involved as respects the quantum of British shipping and British seamen that have been employed in the West-India trade.'

" On turning, however, to the Report to which this writer refers, it will be found that the Committee absolutely scout, as altogether untenable, the very proposition which Mr. Marryat represents them as admitting. Their words are ' Your Committee would have dropped the subject here, were it not barely possible that they may be called upon to notice two other topics, which have been laid before the public in some late productions from the West-India interest. It has been gravely contended, 1st. That this is a question in which the maritime interests of the country are involved, as respects the quantum

of British shipping and British seamen that have been employed by the West-India trade, meaning thereby to infer that these would be lessened by withdrawing the protection which that trade has hitherto enjoyed. 2d. That the revenue which the country has derived from the duties on West-India sugar, would be lessened, provided the protection which the West Indians have hitherto enjoyed was withdrawn. *These arguments, if they can be called such, have been used merely to catch the unthinking, and are almost too frivolous to be noticed; and yet, as they have been gravely advanced by no less important a body than the House of Assembly of Jamaica, &c.* And yet, with this passage before him, in the very page from which he pretends to quote, he has the singular boldness *gravely* to state that the Committee express themselves ‘with some degree of diffidence’ on this subject; and that they ADMIT the very point which they declare they deem almost too preposterous for argument! What reliance, I ask, is it possible to place on such representations?

“According to this writer, the comfort and happiness, nay the very lives of 700,000 human beings are made to depend on the high price of sugar. A work, however, is now in the press which will place this point in its true light, and will prove, beyond question, that, in their effects on the condition of the slaves who are employed in its cultivation, high prices of produce have ever been injurious, while low prices of produce have always been beneficial, tending to mitigate their treatment and to promote their ultimate emancipation; the natural precursor of which is a great reduction in the value of slave-labour.

“In page 81, the Author of the Reply gives a list of articles which he says cannot be imported direct into the West Indies from other countries, and cost more on being imported from this: these are ‘iron, coarse glass, cordage, sail-cloth, osnaburghs, cotton and coffee bagging, checks, linens of every description, silks of all sorts, paper-hangings, cheese, wines,

brandy, geneva, and soap.' The people of the United States, however, cannot be supposed to buy any thing from England which they could get cheaper elsewhere; yet they import large quantities of iron from this, though it pays a higher duty, than from any other country. They import, also, very largely of cotton bagging, and I do not know that they import it from any other country. Linens are also exported from hence to America, and so they are to Cuba. And as to wines and brandy, they are actually enumerated in the schedules of the Act of Parliament as articles which may be imported directly from the place of their growth. So much for the accuracy of this writer.

"We are further told by this writer (p. 17), that the West Indies import every thing from us, even their *bricks and lime*. Now, if a country will supply us with cheap goods, it is, I conceive, of very little consequence in what they take their payment; bricks and lime as well as any thing else. Indeed this is a point on which we need not concern ourselves, for those we deal with will take care that they are paid in something which they want. The articles, however, which a country takes from us will sometimes indicate whether we can expect to get things cheap from them. The country, for instance, where labour is so reduced in value that they can manufacture coarse articles for themselves, and therefore only take from us those articles in fabricating which human skill and machinery are united, is the most likely to supply us with cheap goods. But if the West Indians cannot make even their own bricks, it is perfectly ridiculous to talk about being hindered from manufacturing other articles. Who, indeed, ever heard of slaves manufacturing for exportation? The necessity under which this West Indian states the West Indies to be of importing even *bricks*, affords the most decisive proof of the advantages of free labour. The labour of a slave costs his master not more than 9*d.* or 1*s.* per day, in interest, food, and clothing, and yet we see that the master of slaves imports bricks from

England made by free labourers who earn 5s. 6s. and often 7s. 6d. per day. Here we perceive the inefficacy of the lash when compared with a higher inducement.

“ In the whole of this pamphlet there is not one word about the bounty on the export of sugar, by which the price is raised about 6*f.* per cwt. to the British consumer. This was a subject which it did not suit its author to notice, though it is one of immense importance to the country. It is one which will shortly be treated upon more at large.

“ I shall no further notice his reference to the authority of a French minister of state than to remark, that it is a fact well known that the French and the English treat their slaves much worse than the Spanish and Portuguese, who, in consequence of their milder system, can afford their productions at a lower rate, and can therefore do without those bounties on cruelty which the French and English require.

“ To conclude, the East Indians ask for no restrictions on other trades, and therefore most cordially unite in the proposal to throw open our ports to the admission of the Spanish and Portuguese sugars, as well as to those of China, Java, and Siam, on equal duties. And if, in this state of things, the West Indians have any claim for indemnity, let them receive it direct from the country, that there may be an end of the claim, and that the trade of the country may be unshackled. There can be no reason for their objecting to this arrangement but one, and that is, a hope that the price of sugar will rise, and then this writer tells us, that when the Gazette price shall have reached 69*f.* per cwt. East-India sugars may come in at the same rate of duty as that of the West Indies. This is, indeed, a modest proposition! The country pays now to the West Indians £1,200,000 to £1,500,000 per annum; and when they have extracted 42*f.* per cwt. more, that is altogether £7,500,000 from the pockets of the people, we then may look for some partial relief from the clemency of this writer and his friends. Then East-India sugars may be imported freely. Such are the

tender mercies of the West-Indian party towards the people of this country !”

Thus far Mr. Cropper. His observations will render my remaining task very light.

The Author of the Reply (p. 20) speaks of the Lascar seamen as “a tawny race,”—“wretches whom the law declares to be nuisances.” We see here something of the prejudices on the subject of colour generated by West-Indian habits of thinking. I fear much that our British seamen, if living idly for weeks or months in some Indian or Chinese city, would prove far greater nuisances to the population of the place, than the poor Lascars prove in London. And as to their feebleness, are they not the same race who have maintained the glory of the British flag in many a well-fought field on shore? But, besides all this, our Author must have known that the use of Lascars does not supersede the use of British seamen. A ship navigated to this country by Lascars must take back as many, nay even more British seamen, than if she had sailed hence originally.

He finds a very convenient set-off to the West-Indian monopoly in that possessed by the East-India Company, by which he says the public are made to pay for their supply of tea £2,700,000 a year more than they ought. I do not defend this costly arrangement; but I do not see what remedy can be found for it, until the Company’s charter shall expire.

The “starving of some hundred thousands of slaves in the West Indies,” observes the author, “must be the inevitable consequence of superseding them in the cultivation of sugar; for in the old islands the woods which formerly attracted the clouds, and brought down rain, have long since been felled, and the soil is become so arid, that the growth of provisions cannot be depended upon.” Again; “In many of the old islands, if the master cannot maintain his slaves by the sale of produce, they cannot maintain themselves by the growth of provisions, but must inevitably starve.” Reply, p. 28, 29.

Every line of the above extract involves an absolute fallacy. To prove this, it is only necessary to turn to one of the pamphlets to which he professes to reply; but the statements of which on this very point, as well as on many others, he chooses entirely to overlook, I mean "East and West India Sugar" (p. 79-88). Referring you to that passage for a decisive refutation of the above assertions, I would beg leave to ask the Author of them whether he includes Jamaica in the list of our old islands, the soil of which is become so arid that the growth of provisions cannot be depended upon? On the contrary, is it not the fact that the food which the slaves of that island in general have to depend upon, is what they themselves raise on the Sunday, and a few additional days in the year? If the Author's statement, as it respects this island, is correct, then 345,000 slaves are actually given over by their masters to inevitable destruction the first dry season that occurs, they being left to depend wholly on the culture of an arid soil. If he says that he excepts Jamaica from the general description, then he at once exempts half the slaves in the West Indies from the starvation which, he tells us, is inevitably to follow a low price of sugar.

But let us take another of our old islands, Barbadoes; an island, too, much less favourably situated than Jamaica for the growth of provisions; because the woods there have long since been felled, and the soil is more arid. But does the feeding of the slaves in this island, as is alleged, depend on the high price of sugar? I answer, in no degree. Provisions have always proved there as sure a crop as the cane. The same may be said of our colonies in Guiana, which, it is true, are not themselves old colonies, but which, when joined to the two previously mentioned, give an aggregate of about 510,000 of our slave population, being more than two-thirds of the whole, who do not depend on imported provisions for their subsistence, but almost entirely on the produce of their own soil. Of the remaining colonies several, doubtless, depend too much on

imported food, but this not from necessity but choice. The only island among them which is subject to severe droughts is Antigua, and there the drought affects the canes in full as great, if not a greater degree, than it affects other articles of culture. Whenever there is moisture enough to secure a crop of canes, there is always enough to secure a crop of provisions also. If the negroes starve, therefore, it cannot be owing to the low price of sugar, but to the unpardonable neglect of the planter in not cultivating provisions. There never, in short, was a more unfounded statement employed to mislead the public than this, that a soil and climate capable of producing the sugar cane are not also capable of producing food for the cultivators of it. The sugar cane is one of the most exhausting crops which can be raised on any soil, and it is therefore the very height of extravagance to pretend to say that a soil adapted to its growth is incapable of producing articles of food.

To affirm, therefore, that a low price of sugar tends to starve the slaves, is the very reverse of truth. The tendency of a low price of sugar, if matters were left to their natural course, would be to diminish the growth of sugar, and to increase the growth of food. The labour abstracted from the one would be profitably applied to the other, and both planter and slave must benefit by the change.

The Author of the Reply (p. 45), chooses to stigmatise my pamphlet as full of "invectives and exaggerations" on the subject of colonial slavery. As he has not condescended to specify any of these, I am at a loss to what points to direct my defence. He would insinuate, indeed, that 95 of the 103 pages of which the pamphlet consists are of this description. He finds it easier, I am persuaded, to pass this sweeping sentence upon them, than to grapple with their statements and arguments. For my own part, I do not feel that I have overstepped the line of fair reasoning in the discussion of this large and most momentous question. I took up the arguments of my opponents, and replied to them in the best way I could.

If I either mistated these arguments, or failed in refuting them, I became justly liable to the rebuke of the Author of the Reply. But is it fair, because some parts of that refutation may prove unpalatable to him and his friends, that I should therefore be represented as labouring to “excite such an odium against the West-India planters as will dispose their fellow-subjects to ruin them without pity or remorse;” and again, as “vilifying them?” Whether in the pamphlet which is thus characterised I have *vilified* the West-Indian planters, or have conducted myself in the discussion and refutation of their claims with moderation and forbearance, will be better understood when the system of negro slavery comes itself, as it soon must, to be examined in Parliament. Already has the great leader in the cause of humanity made his eloquent and energetic “appeal to the religion, justice, and humanity of the inhabitants of the British empire, in behalf of the negro slaves in the West Indies.” Already have the friends of that cause in Liverpool exhibited to the world a just but appalling picture of “Negro Slavery,” as it exists in the United States and in the British West Indies. Already has the impulse given on this subject been felt from one extremity of the empire to another; and I am far from affecting to deny, that I cordially participate in it. But certainly, in conducting the discussion respecting East and West India sugar, I carefully abstained from the subject of negro slavery, except in as much as I was compelled to advert to it by the course of my argument.

From the tone, however, which is taken by the Author of the Reply, and by some others, it would appear as if there were something criminal, something which was an unpardonable outrage on candour and truth, in holding strong language on the subject of the personal slavery to which the wretched negroes are subjected in the British colonies. Is it then, in Great Britain; in the middle of the 19th century; after we have ourselves achieved the abolition of the slave-trade, and while we are urging other nations to abolish it after our example;—is it

while in parliament, and out of parliament, every pulse beats high from a sense of the political wrongs inflicted on Spain; and while the walls of the House of Commons are still resounding, and our ears still tingle with the terrible eloquence which has denounced the oppressors of its rising freedom;—is it, I say, under such circumstances, that we must select, with studious solicitude, the terms in which we speak of one of the greatest practical evils which can either afflict humanity, or stain the character of our country; lest the feelings of those who are unfortunately holders of slaves should be wounded by what they choose to term invective? But to return.

The writer of the Reply would persuade us (page 62) that the protection which West Indians seek against East Indians, is similar to what our agriculturists are seeking against foreign corn. The protection against foreign corn may be, and I believe is, unwise and impolitic, and it may even be injurious to the general interests of this country. But it cannot be said to be unjust towards France, or Poland, or Russia. The protection, however, to West-India sugar against East-India sugars is not only both commercially impolitic and detrimental to the interests of the community at large, but it is unjust to British India; as unjust as it would be to cut off the north of England from the right to supply London with corn, lest the interests of the south should suffer.

It is amusing to hear this Author speak of the *voluntary* surrender by the East-India Company of a part of their charter, when, in truth, there never was a more marked case of inevitable compulsion. Doubtless, they took whatever Parliament, was pleased to allow them. But the terms of their charter were such as Parliament imposed, not as they would have chosen.

I admit that I was incorrect in my conception of the measures adopted relative to the trade of our North American Colonies. It was a diminution, and not a repeal, of the protecting duties which was enacted.

The Author of the Reply charges me with unfairness, be-

cause when the duties on sugar were fixed in 1787, I estimated the average price of sugar at 40s. per cwt.—and he quotes the high price in 1792 as a proof of it. I was looking to the past, however, and not to the future. The revolution of St. Domingo produced, it is true, an extraordinary rise in the price of sugar. But the Author of the Reply must be aware, had the duties still remained on the same footing on which they stood in 1787, that, during the last year, while West-India sugars were paying 27s. a cwt. East-India would not have been paying more than 10s. or 12s. per cwt.

Mr. Marryat endeavours to get rid of the impression of his speech in 1809, in favour of the free admission of Martinique sugars, by saying that his argument had a reference only to dependencies which were subjected to the colonial restrictions, and not to possessions like India which were free from them. But this is a complete misrepresentation of his own argument; for he there advocates the policy of admitting not merely the sugars of conquered colonies, but *all foreign* sugars.—His words are, “It is granted that, when charters were first given to encourage the settlement of the British Islands, and owing to the infancy of their establishment, it was an expedient and necessary encouragement to secure to them the exclusive supply of the British market, by imposing such duties on *foreign* sugars as should amount to a prohibition: but now it is evident that this restriction can no longer be of use to them,” &c. “The charge of inconsistency, therefore,” he adds, “cannot be brought against me.”

But, if he were consistent in 1809 in pleading for the free admission of *foreign* sugars, on the ground that the restriction was of no use to the West Indians, while it was injurious to other interests, he is surely inconsistent now in pleading for the exclusion of East-India sugars, more especially as he still advocates the cause of foreign sugars. His argument in favour of the admission of foreign sugars I think perfectly sound; but it does seem a most extraordinary piece of capriciousness

to argue, at the same moment, for the admission of foreign and the exclusion of East-India sugars. It is like arguing for the admission of Polish and the exclusion of Irish corn.

The Author of the Reply accuses his opponents (p. 86) of reproaching the West Indians “with not being content with a fair market price;” while, although they are paying 6 per cent. on their borrowed capital, they do not make more than 1 per cent. of it. We certainly are wrongfully accused in this instance. We should be, indeed, most unreasonable, had we any reproach to make to the West Indians on this score. Our complaint is directed not against the West Indians, but against the policy of continuing, at an immense expense to the public, and to the great injury of many most valuable branches of trade and manufactures, to maintain a system which, by the Author’s own admission, *is approaching with rapid strides to ruin*; more especially as this unwise policy is attended with actual injustice towards the population of British India, and with an aggravation of the sufferings even of the slaves in our West-Indian colonies. This is our subject of reproach. As for the West Indians, who, it is freely admitted, are objects of great commiseration, let them be indemnified, if entitled to indemnity, in some other way: in some way which may benefit them, without injuring others. The course now pursued, while it seriously injures others, yields them no real benefit. There are, perhaps, 2000 sugar estates in the West Indies. A pension of even £1000 a-year to the owners of each of these would not only infinitely more than compensate them for a business which only yields 1 per cent. on their capital, while they are paying 6; but it would be a saving to the country. Very much less than a fourth of this sum however, I am persuaded, would satisfy every claim that could *fairly* be urged on behalf of the West Indians, in case the present protection to their sugars were done away. On this point, I beg to refer you to the pamphlet on East and West India Sugar, p. 33–56.

I will only make one more remark before I conclude this long

letter: it is this, that Mr. Marryat, in professing to reply to the different pamphlets, which have recommended an equalization of the duties on East and West India sugar, has contrived to overlook many points of the greatest weight in the discussion. This is particularly the case in respect to that pamphlet with which I may be supposed to be best acquainted, and by far the greater part of which is left wholly untouched by his arguments.

I remain with real regard,

My Dear Sir,

Yours, very faithfully,

THE AUTHOR OF "EAST AND WEST
INDIA SUGAR."

London, 14 March, 1823.

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[Macaulay, Zachary]

A letter to William L. Whitmore, Esq.,
M.P.

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